

## Abstract

**Background:** Measles and Influenza can lead to severe health problems and thus pose a considerable public health problem today. However, vaccination rates against influenza and measles remain low worldwide. To raise the vaccination rate in Switzerland is therefore of major interest to the Swiss government.

**Objectives:** The aim of this study is to understand which factors influence the decision-making of people living in Switzerland regarding vaccination in order to provide recommendations to policymakers on how to improve vaccination rates. Thereby, it focuses on the acceptance (knowledge, attitudes, and practices) of the subgroups of child carers, patients and healers, and of health care workers.

**Methods:** A qualitative exploratory approach of semi-structured interviews was used (n=30). The main setting was the German-speaking part of Switzerland (n=20), as this is known to generally have lower vaccination rates. It was complemented by a sample of critical people in the French part of Switzerland (n=10), and by a MPH-Thesis, which concentrated on the factors that influence the acceptance especially of influenza vaccination within the group of health care workers (n=12) in German speaking Switzerland. For recruitment, purposive sampling of people with potential criticism against vaccination was applied. The analysis followed the principles of thematic content analysis.

**Results:** Four main themes were identified as having impacted the decisions: 1) Understanding of the diseases (functioning, severity, risk); 2) Individual factors (information sources, fears, judgments, attitudes, infrastructure); 3) Social influences on vaccination (friends, family, colleagues, economic factors); and 4) Means to improve vaccination (need for statistics, facts, numbers and evidence; neutral institutions, way of uptake).

**Conclusions:** Factors related to knowledge (disease), fear (vaccine), the wider environment and mistrust in the pharmaceutical industry impact peoples' decision-making. They want information regarding the advantages and the disadvantages of vaccination and ask for transparency regarding the role of pharmaceutical companies.

**Recommendations:** Child carers and Patients critical of vaccinations need relation-based information and interventions and want to be reminded in a context of trust. Health Care Workers need to be made aware of their professional/ethical role in preventing diseases. Moreover, they should be actively included in the development of campaigns. Vaccination competitions within hospitals along with publishing of vaccination rates have shown to be successful and could be implemented. Actions need to be taken so that people critical of vaccinations have trust in the FOPH.